

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 6, 9, 14, 17 to 19, 26, 34, 39, 42, 47, 50, and 57 as shown below.

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:
user information storing means for storing user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus; and

 multiplexing means for multiplexing the stored user information to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

 wherein, said user information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus is obtained and stored in the storing means when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and

 wherein said user information multiplexed to the output image is not visible in said output image.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising information setting means for setting predetermined information related to the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus,

 wherein the multiplexing means multiplexes the predetermined information

to the output image.

4. (Original) An image processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the predetermined information is a public key certification.

5. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the predetermined information is information to specify an objective use on a database.

6. (Currently Amended) An electronic commerce system which performs electronic commerce connecting one terminal with another terminal through a network, the system comprising:

information setting means for setting, in an image processing apparatus, information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus, the information being obtained through the network; and

multiplexing means for multiplexing said information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus set by the information setting means to an output image to be output printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein said set information multiplexed to the output image is not visible in said output image.

7. (Original) An electronic commerce system according to claim 6, wherein the information set by the information setting means is a public key certification.

8. (Previously Presented) An electronic commerce system according to claim 6, wherein the information set by the setting means is information to specify an objective use on a database.

9. (Currently Amended) An image processing method, comprising the steps of:

a user information storing step for storing, in an image processing apparatus, user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus; and

a multiplexing step for the image processing apparatus to multiplex the stored user information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein said user information is obtained and stored in the storing step when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and

wherein said user information multiplexed to the output image is not visible in said output image.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 9, further comprising an information setting step for setting predetermined information related to the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus,

wherein the multiplexing step multiplexes the predetermined information to the output image.

12. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 11, wherein the predetermined information is a public key certification.

13. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 11, wherein the predetermined information is information to specify an objective use on a database.

14. (Currently Amended) An electronic commerce method which performs electronic commerce connecting one terminal with another terminal through a network, the method comprising the steps of:

an information setting step of setting, in an image processing apparatus, information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus, the information being obtained through the network; and

a multiplexing step of the image processing apparatus multiplexing said information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus set by the information setting step to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as

to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein said user information multiplexed to the output image is not visible in said output image.

15. (Previously Presented) An electronic commerce method according to claim 14, wherein the information set in the information setting step is a public key certification.

16. (Previously Presented) An electronic commerce method according to claim 14, wherein the set information is information to specify an objective use on a database.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer program stored on a computer readable medium, the program for executing image processing on an image processing apparatus, said program comprising the steps of:

a user information storing step of storing, in an image processing apparatus, user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus; and

a multiplexing step of multiplexing the stored user information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein, said user information is obtained and stored in the storing step when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

18. (Currently Amended) A computer program stored on a computer readable medium, the program for performing electronic commerce through a network system connecting one terminal with another terminal through a network, the computer program product comprising the steps of:

an information setting step of setting, in an image processing apparatus, information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus, the information being obtained through the network; and

a multiplexing step of multiplexing said information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus set by the information setting means to an output image to be output printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

19. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for an image processing apparatus, comprising the steps of:

a user information storing step of storing, in the image processing apparatus,

user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus; and

a multiplexing step of the image processing apparatus multiplexing the stored user information of the seller or buyer of the information processing apparatus to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein, the user information is obtained and stored in the storing step when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and

wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

20. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 19, wherein the user information comprises a public key certification, an account number of the buyer, or credit card information of the buyer.

21. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 19, wherein the user information comprises information of the seller, information of a date of sale, or information of a store selling the image processing apparatus.

22. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 19, wherein the user information is stored when a driver of the image processing apparatus is downloaded or is installed.

23. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 19, wherein the multiplexing is performed by using a digital watermark.

24. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 19, wherein the digital watermark is added in a spatial area of the output image.

25. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 19, wherein the digital watermark is added in a frequency area of the output image.

26. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for a image processing apparatus, comprising the steps of:

a user information receiving step for the image processing apparatus receiving user information of a seller or a buyer of an image processing product from the image processing product; and

a multiplexing step for the image processing apparatus to multiplex the received user information of the seller or buyer of the information processing product to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein, said user information is received by the image processing apparatus when the image processing product is sold through a network, and

wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

27. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 26, wherein the user information comprises a public key certification, an account number of the buyer, or credit card information of the buyer.

28. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 26, wherein the user information comprises information of the seller, information of a date of sale, or information of a store selling the image processing apparatus.

29. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 26, wherein the user information is received when a driver of the image processing apparatus is downloaded or is installed.

30. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 26, wherein the multiplexing is performed by using a digital watermark.

31. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 26, wherein the digital watermark is added in a spatial area of the output image.

32. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 26, wherein the digital watermark is added in a frequency area of the output image.

33. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim

26, wherein the image processing product comprises a personal computer, a scanner, or an image processing software.

34. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:
a memory storing user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus; and
a controller multiplexing the stored user information of the seller or buyer of the information processing apparatus to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein, said user information is obtained and stored in the memory when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and

wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

35. (Canceled)

36. (Previously Presented) An image processing apparatus according to claim 34, further comprising a processor setting predetermined information related to the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus,

wherein the controller multiplexes the predetermined information to the output image.

37. (Original) An image processing apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the predetermined information is a public key certification.

38. (Original) An image processing apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the predetermined information is information to specify an objective use on a database.

39. (Currently Amended) An electronic commerce system which performs electronic commerce connecting one terminal with another terminal through a network, the system comprising:

a processor setting, in an image processing apparatus, information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus, the information being obtained through the network; and

a controller multiplexing said information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus set by the processor to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

40. (Original) An electronic commerce system according to claim 39, wherein the information set by the processor is a public key certification.

41. (Previously Presented) An electronic commerce system according to claim 39, wherein the set information is information to specify an objective use on a database.

42. (Currently Amended) An image processing method, comprising the steps of:

storing, in an image processing apparatus, user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus; and

multiplexing the stored user information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein, said user information is obtained and stored in the storing step when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and

wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

43. (Canceled)

44. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 42, further comprising setting predetermined information related to the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus,

wherein the predetermined information is multiplexed to the output image.

45. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 44., wherein the predetermined information is a public key certification.

46. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 44, wherein the predetermined information is information to specify an objective use on a database.

47. (Currently Amended) An electronic commerce method which performs electronic commerce connecting one terminal with another terminal through a network, the method comprising the steps of:

setting, in an image processing apparatus, information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus, the information being obtained through the network; and

multiplexing said information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus set by the setting step to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

48. (Previously Presented) An electronic commerce method according to claim 47, wherein the set information is a public key certification.

49. (Previously Presented) An electronic commerce method according to claim 47, wherein the set information is information to specify an objective use on a database.

50. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for an image processing apparatus, comprising the steps of:

storing, in the image processing apparatus, user information of a seller or a buyer of the image processing apparatus; and

multiplexing the stored user information of the seller or buyer of the image processing apparatus to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein, said user information is obtained and stored in the storing step when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and

wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

51. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 50, wherein the user information comprises a public key certification, an account number of the buyer, or credit card information of the buyer.

52. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim

50, wherein the user information comprises information of the seller, information of a date of sale, or information of a store selling the image processing apparatus.

53. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 50, wherein the user information is stored when a driver of the image processing apparatus is downloaded or is installed.

54. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 50, wherein the multiplexing is performed by using a digital watermark.

55. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 54, wherein the digital watermark is added in a spatial area of the output image.

56. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 54, wherein the digital watermark is added in a frequency area of the output image.

57. (Currently Amended) An image processing method for an image processing apparatus, comprising the steps of:

receiving, by the image processing apparatus, user information of a seller or a buyer of an image processing product from the image processing product; and

multiplexing the received user information of the seller or buyer of the information product to an output image to be ~~output~~ printed by the image processing

apparatus so as to facilitate identification of the seller or the buyer of the image processing apparatus from the output image,

wherein, said user information is received when the image processing apparatus is sold through a network, and

wherein said user information multiplexed in the output image is not visible in said output image.

58. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 57, wherein the user information comprises a public key certification, an account number of the buyer, or credit card information of the buyer.

59. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 57, wherein the user information comprises information of the seller, information of a date of sale, or information of a store selling the image processing apparatus.

60. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 57, wherein the user information is received when a driver of the image processing apparatus is downloaded or is installed.

61. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 57, wherein the multiplexing is performed by using a digital watermark.

62. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 61, wherein the digital watermark is added in a spatial area of the output image.

63. (Original) An image processing method according to claim 61, wherein the digital watermark is added in a frequency area of the output image.

64. (Previously Presented) An image processing method according to claim 57, wherein the image processing product comprises a personal computer, a scanner, or an image processing software.